

Begonias Beauteous

Begonias are a beautiful and diverse group of plants, made up of over 1500 species, with some being suitable as bedding plants or for container gardens, some for hanging baskets and others for indoor cultivation. Begonias are treasured not only for their colorful flowers but for their unique foliage. We would like to introduce you to begonias that make spectacular houseplants.



Begonias require little care when growing indoors; they need plenty of bright light with shading from the intense afternoon sun. Comfortable indoor temperatures are advisable, 65 -70 degrees Fahrenheit, and should drop slightly at night, but not below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Begonias are very sensitive to over watering; make certain that soil drains well, pot has a drainage hole, and water is not permitted to stand in the saucer. It is beneficial to provide additional humidity as heating and air conditioning robs indoor air of precious moisture. The best way to increase humidity is by providing a humidity tray underneath your begonias. Avoid misting these plants to prevent mildew from occurring on the leaves.

Indoor grown begonias are relatively carefree if they are kept healthy. Insects that commonly affect indoor plant may also cause problems for begonias, these include; mealybug, whitefly and spider mites. If leaves become crispy around the edges it is an indication that the plant requires more humidity. If leaves yellow and start to fall off it is an indication that the plant is receiving too much water. If you have any questions about these or any other houseplant problems, please call or stop by our greenhouse and speak with one of our experts.

Some of the best begonias for indoor cultivation are:

Angle Wing:

Angle Wing begonias are favored for their large, colorful, patterned, wing shaped leaves. Flowers of this begonia are large and hang in clusters and tend to be soft in color.

Flowers are available in a range of colors in demure shades of white, pink, red and orange. These plants have a cascading habit and lend themselves well to hanging baskets but look just as nice in pots. Fertilize plants once a month during the growing season with a balanced water soluble fertilizer such as *Jack' Classic Houseplant Special 15-30-15*. Be sure to give plants a rest from fertilization during the winter months. You may pinch Angel Wing begonias to keep them at a manageable size and also to promote new canes at the base of the plant. Angle Wing begonias may be hung outside, in a semi-shaded area, during the summer months.

Rex:

Rex begonias, although they do flower, are grown primarily for their striking foliage. The leaves of the Rex begonia are uniquely shaped, unusually patterned, heavily textured, and come in exceptional combinations of colors such as green, pink, red, silver, yellow, orange, maroon and purple. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer such as *Jack's Classic All Purpose Plant Food 20-20-20* and use at half strength, with alternate waterings, during the growing season.



Rieger:

Rieger begonias are some of the most valued and easy to care for houseplants. Riegers bloom for several months in the winter, and the bright double or semi-double flowers, in brilliant shades of white, yellow, orange, pink and red, are the main attraction of this plant. Glossy, deep green leaves are another reason to love Riegers. Flowers will last longer if temperatures are on the cooler side, between 55 – 65 degrees Fahrenheit. When in flower, plants should be fed every week with a high phosphorus, water soluble fertilizer to promote flowering, try *Jack's Classic Blossom Booster 10-30-20* at quarter strength each time you water. Dead head spent blossoms to encourage new blooms.